

bulletin

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The Brahimi Report— A Cogent Analysis of UN Peace Operations

by Andrew Mack

Many United Nations peace operations during the 1990s enjoyed quiet success; others were tragic failures. Two major UN reports were published in 1999 dissecting two of the worst failures in the Organization's history.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's own report *The Fall of Srebrenica* focused on the events that led up to the massacre of thousands of Bosnian-Muslim civilians following the fall of the United Nations-designated safe area of Srebrenica. Its unsparing account demonstrated how, in the events leading up to the mass killings, the traditional United Nations peace-keeping ethos of non-violence, consent and impartiality towards antagonists, coupled with the reluctance of the international community to meet aggression with force, resulted in disaster.

The causes of the genocide in Rwanda that killed some 800,000 people in 1994 were very different from those of the Srebrenica massacre, but the analysis of the failure of the international community to prevent the killings was in many ways similar. The report of the independent inquiry into the Rwandan genocide which Secretary-General Annan commissioned concluded that the fundamental cause was "the lack of resources and political commitment" needed to protect the innocent.

While both reports contained valuable recommendations, it was clear that a more comprehensive diagnosis was needed of the deep-rooted problems that have so persistently undermined UN peace operations in the field. In March this year the Secretary-General announced that a high-level panel chaired by former Algerian Foreign Minister Lakdhar Brahimi had been tasked with undertaking a major review of UN peace operations. The panel's report, the

most incisive and comprehensive analysis of peace operations ever undertaken by the United Nations, was published in late August.

The report's analysis, like those that preceded it, was deeply critical. "Over the last decade", the report stated flatly, "the United Nations has repeatedly failed to meet the challenge" of protecting people from war, and "it can do no better today". The diagnosis of failure is followed by sweeping recommendations for change that are realistic and cogently argued.

The report points out that it is hardly surprising that a number of the peace operations of the past decade have failed. Missions have deployed in situations where conflicts remained unresolved and where external actors and local 'spoilers' have had economic or political incentives to break weak peace agreements and resume fighting.

The report argues that the UN can only do its job if the Security Council's mandates are appropriate and the resources are adequate for the task in hand. Too often mandates are ambiguous and forces inadequate. Too often operations are planned on 'best case' assumptions, where 'worst case' outcomes are likely to prevail.

Implementing the panel's recommendations will require the provision of extra resources. This is essential if the UN is to mount effective peace operations in the future.

While the recommended reforms will not be cost-free, the costs are trivial compared with the human and economic costs of inaction—as the tragedies of Rwanda and Srebrenica constantly remind us. The total cost of all UN peace-keeping operations in support of global security and human rights is less than one half of one percent of the amount that the world's nations spend on national defense.

In his annual report to this year's General Assembly, Mr. Annan notes that few could doubt that the current level of UN Secretariat support for peace operations is

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inadequate. He points out that the 13,000 UN peacekeepers currently serving in Sierra Leone are supported by just five full-time workers at the UN's New York headquarters. "No national government would dream of deploying a comparably sized military mission overseas with such a minimal headquarters support unit."

The Brahimi Report is frank and fair in its analysis, sensible and practical in what it recommends. Implementation of its key recommendations is essential if the United Nations is to become a truly credible force for peace.

At the time of writing there were some grounds for cautious optimism that the recommendations would be acted on. Most commentary on the report—from officials as well as the media—has been very positive and the Secretary-General has committed the UN Secretariat to implementing those parts of the report that lie within its jurisdiction.

The United States has indicated its broad support and the British government has proposed creating a UN staff college in the United Kingdom to train peacekeepers. Securing the funds necessary to strengthen the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will not be easy. But, as the Secretary-General argues in his annual report, the international community must accept that additional resources are essential if the United Nations is to meet its Charter commitment "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

Professor Andrew Mack is Director of the Strategic Planning Unit at the Executive Office of the Secretary General at the United Nations. (The full text of the Brahimi Report is available at www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations)

Staff Spotlight:



**Kiflemariam
Gebrewold**

Born and raised in Ethiopia, Kiflemariam has German citizenship—a rare phenomenon. He received a degree in tropical agriculture and took his Masters degree in social sciences in Bochum, Germany, focusing on development studies and journalism.

Despite having a scholarship to do a Ph.D., Kiflemariam decided to take up an assignment in the Côte d'Ivoire as a development worker with the German Service Overseas. The assignment, which was supposed to last only a few years, continued for ten years during which he was posted to Kenya, and even to his native Ethiopia. Most of his work dealt with relief, rehabilitation and development projects.

His first encounter with small arms occurred in the mid-eighties. While on a mission as an agriculturist in Burkina Faso, he was stopped by a soldier with an AK-47. His alleged 'crime': entering a one-way street in the wrong direction! Since then he has collaborated on development issues involving small arms with organizations such as Bread for the World, Amnesty International, Saferworld and the International Security Information Service. His first task at BICC was to organize an international conference on *Converting Defense Resources to Human Development* and to publish the proceedings.

Today he heads BICC's SALIGAD-project which explores the dynamics and the impact of Small Arms in the member states of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD).

Kiflemariam has published extensively on topics such as: smart sanctions, small arms and child soldiers, mercenaries, and crisis prevention.

His favorite activities include hanging around with his daughters and learning all about new trends in music from them.

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**Bonn International Center for Conversion
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The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and facilitating the processes whereby people, skills, technology, equipment, and financial and economic resources can be shifted away from the defense sector and applied to alternative civilian uses.

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Second Wave of Base Closures Expected in Germany

Federal Minister of Defense Rudolf Scharping has started to implement plans for the structural reform of the German armed forces. The decision to reduce the number of troops will lead to a second wave of base closures nation-wide. According to the media, 167 locations are currently under debate. The Gesellschaft für Entwicklung, Beschaffung und Betrieb GmbH (GEBB) was set up on 1st September 2000 as a limited company responsible for development, procurement and operations in order to streamline the civilian sector of the German armed forces according to market principles. One of the GEBB's tasks will be to organize the marketing of former military sites. Profit will be the predominant consideration since proceeds will serve to partially finance purchases of new equipment for the armed forces.

BICC has gained extensive experience in the field of advising communities affected by base closures, and has been supporting communities in North Rhine-Westfalia which received funds from the EU-KONVER Program in the whole redevelopment process since 1995. Because of its specific status as a NGO, BICC has often been able to assume the role of a neutral mediator between the Federal Government and the communities affected by conversion. Coordination and mediation are of the utmost importance in the conversion process, which involves a wide range of different stakeholders—often with conflicting interests.

So far it has not been decided which organizations, institutions etc. will be involved in implementing the reforms. BICC is seeking an assignment either on behalf of the Federal Government or the communities affected and has developed concepts for intervention. BICC has also updated its website, highlighting information about the sites which are to be closed and describing comprehensive conversion strategies (www.bicc.de/bw-standorte). The website also provides information on potential problems in the field of practical conversion as well as case studies on 'best practices'. Information brokerage plays an important role in smoothing negotiations between the different actors involved in such projects.

→ For further information please contact
Renée Ernst at ernst@bicc.de or
Ulrich Schirowski at us@bicc.de.

Soldiers in Eastern Europe in Search of Business

What factors determined the structure of the armed forces in Eastern Europe in the 1990s? Central Eastern European countries reduced their armed forces dramatically during the last decade. Changes in the composition of the armed forces are part of an overarching process of restructuring—from mass armies to small inter-operational units with modern equipment.

Andreas Heinemann-Grüder has been leader of a BICC project on the restructuring of the armed forces and demobilization in Eastern Europe in the 1990s since November 1999. The project sets out to analyze four factors determining the structure, size, and tasks of the newly built armed forces: perceptions and conceptions of security; the interests of the military itself and of the political elites; resource allocation; and the impact of the external environment. Particular attention will be paid to demobilization. How did the thousands of officers who were laid-off adjust to post-military life and what learning processes did agencies dealing with demobilization undergo? The handling of demobilization is indicative of changes in the military's influence on politics and in society at large. The study encompasses the Baltic states, Poland, Hungary and Ukraine. Thirty former officers will be interviewed in each country using a standardized questionnaire. As of August 2000, interviews have been conducted with former officers, academic experts, representatives of the respective foreign and defense ministries, parliaments and military academies in the Baltic states and Poland.

The project is being conducted in cooperation with research teams in each country under study and with the Berliner Informationszentrum für Transatlantische Sicherheit (Information Center for Transatlantic Security).

Andreas Heinemann-Grüder is excited about the opportunity to make use of his background in the field of Russian studies and to relate his insights into Russian transition to other post-socialist countries.

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New addresses!
E-mail: bicc@bicc.de
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BICC Publications

In addition to its annual *conversion survey*, the BICC publishes *disarmament and conversion studies* and other books, BICC publishes *reports, briefs, and papers*. These series analyze the international conversion process, report on conversion projects and experiences, and offer scientific as well as practical know-how. Further details can be obtained at <http://www.bicc.de/publications>

Jürgen Altmann (Hrsg.). 2000. *Dual-use in der Hochtechnologie: Erfahrungen, Strategien und Perspektiven in Telekommunikation und Luftfahrt*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, Germany

Brief 16: Herbert Wulf (ed.), *Practical Dismarmament*, July 2000

Paper 17: Sami Faltas and Holger Anders, *Combating the Excessive and Uncontrolled Accumulation and Spread of Small Arms. A Compilation of Policy Recommendations*, September 2000

Forthcoming:

Brief 17: Ksenia Gonchar, *Russia's Defense Industry at the Turn of the Century*, October 2000

Upcoming Events

Moving Beyond Peace, Rights and Justice—Time for New Views? Will be held in Trento, Italy from 12–14 October. The conference is organized by the International University of Peoples' Institutions for Peace (IUPIP) in collaboration with the University of Trento. Contact: <http://www.unimondo.org/iupip/conference2000/>

An international conference on **Conflict Regulation in Ethnically Divided Societies** will be held in Hannover, Germany from 3/4 November 2000. Contact: <http://www.soz.uni-hannover.de/ipol/asp/confer/index.htm>

The 4th International Security Forum **Coping with the New Security Challenges of Europe** will be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 15–17 November. It examines European security policy, humanitarian aspects and issues such as arms control and civil society. Contact: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/4isf>

The 622nd Wilton Park Conference **Preventing Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century** will take place from 11–14 December in Steyning, United Kingdom. Contact: Heather Ingrey at heather.ingrey@wiltonpark.org.uk

A conference **Facing Ethnic Conflicts—Perspectives from Research and Policy Making**, organized by the Center for Development Research of the University of Bonn, will be held in Bonn, Germany from 14–16 December 2000. Contact: Prof. A. Wimmer at: s.wagener@uni-bonn.de

The Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) is holding a conference on **The Globalization of the Defence Industry—Policy Implications for NATO and ESDI**, from 29/30 January 2001. Contact: <http://www.riia.org/Conferences/cona.html>

An International Conference **Disarmament, Armaments and Conversion in the Regions—International Experiences in the 1990s and Perspectives for "21"**, will be held in Bremen, Germany, 27/28 April 2001. Contact: Prof. Wolfram Elsner at welsner@uni-bremen.de or Michael Brzoska at mb@bicc.de

BICC Notes

The BICC **help desk for practical disarmament** now has its own website. The service assists practitioners in the field of microdisarmament by providing online databases, links and access to a network of experts and specialist organizations as well as to reports and papers on small arms and light weapons.

For further information please contact
→ <http://www.bicc.de/weapons/helpdesk/>

The Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM) hosted a **Round Table Meeting on the Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-combatants in South Africa** in Johannesburg on 3/4 August 2000. Most of the stakeholders involved in the reintegration of former anti-apartheid fighters participated. Researchers from Zimbabwe presented insights into the recent outcry by war veterans in their country. Kees Kingma (BICC) made a presentation on the linkages between demobilization, reintegration and peace-building in Southern Africa.

For further information please contact
→ Kees Kingma at kingma@bicc.de

New Arrivals at BICC: On 1 August **Renée Ernst** succeeded Steve Sokol as head of the project management department. Renée was previously stationed in South East Asia and has worked closely with NGOs and development agencies. We have also recruited **Henri Myrntinen**, a young Finnish national with quite a track record in tackling problems—including environmental problems—related to base closures, particularly in the Baltic states. **Mary Foster**, a Canadian, arrived on 9 September 2000 and succeeds Natalie Pauwels as junior researcher. Mary was one of the first interns in *Project Ploughshares* and has gained quite a reputation, e.g. in the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Also from Canada and a current *Project Ploughshares* intern is **Cheryl Loeb**. She too will be working in the research department. Our new—temporary—Director's assistant is **Mariska Wijt**. A Dutch citizen, she was born in London, raised mainly in Fontainebleau, France and received her M.A. in political science from Cologne University. We wish all our new members of staff: Willkommen, Tervetuloa, Welcome, Welkom, Bienvenue!

For further information on personnel matters, employment opportunities, etc. at BICC, please contact
→ Elmar Pollmann at pollmann@bicc.de